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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6961
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 0352
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 0021
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY 0250
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 8612
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY 0009
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0949
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 1502
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 0014
RUEHSL/AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA PRIORITY 0053
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 3537
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST PRIORITY 0267
RUEHUP/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST PRIORITY 0254
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 1096
RUEHDL/AMEMBASSY DUBLIN PRIORITY 0184
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY 0579
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 1401
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0165
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0976
RUEHLJ/AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA PRIORITY 0058
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1654
RUEHLE/AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG PRIORITY 0490
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 1100
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 1412
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0944
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 1270
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 2063
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1344
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY 0475
RUEHRA/AMEMBASSY RIGA PRIORITY 0057
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0971
RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO PRIORITY 0004
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE PRIORITY 0034
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY 0216
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 1061
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 0066
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI PRIORITY 0022
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 2312
RUEHTI/AMEMBASSY TIRANA PRIORITY 0052
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2603
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY 0279
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY 0819
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 4982
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB PRIORITY 0035
RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE PRIORITY 3884
RUEHBD/AMCONSUL PERTH PRIORITY 2325
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY PRIORITY 1912
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0693
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0038
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0483

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 CANBERRA 000293

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STATE FOR EAP AND SA
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AS](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN PLANS TO INCREASE FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: Ambassador Robert D. McCallum, Jr., for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (S/NF) The Government of Australia, concerned about the upcoming Taliban offensive and worried that Dutch preparations to counter the expected Taliban offensive in southern Afghanistan are not robust enough, are making preliminary plans to deploy an additional 250 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel, including Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment forces, to Oruzgan Province for an extended period. Under the plan, which has not yet been approved by the Cabinet, the additional troops would remain under NATO/ISAF command but adapt a command and control structure used by U.S. forces. Although the opposition opposed the Government's decision to send additional trainers to Iraq, the opposition leader is likely to support plans to strengthen Australia's presence in Afghanistan. End summary.

2. (S/NF) The National Security Committee of Cabinet of Australia has approved in principle planning for deployment of approximately 250 ADF personnel to Oruzgan Province in southern Afghanistan to supplement the 550-strong force currently working under a Dutch-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT.) The Cabinet will make a final decision by the end of March.

3. (S/NF) The impetus for the plan is sensitive reporting predicting an increase in Taliban activity, including suicide bombings and large-scale attacks, over the coming months. It

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also stems from GOA concern that the Dutch military leadership of the PRT is not responding aggressively enough to the expected offensive, according to senior ADOD officials.

4. (S/NF) Senior ADOD personnel have told Embassy officials that they want to have the additional ADF forces use a command and control structure already in use with Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF), rather than the current arrangement with the NATO/ISAF command. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Pace recommended this arrangement during his February 12 meeting with Chief of the Australian Defence Force Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston. ADOD officials told us the timeframe for deployment would likely be early May 2007. The forces would likely remain in Afghanistan for more than one rotation, that is, beyond August 2008, the theoretical end of their two-year commitment. ADOD plans to send a small reconnaissance mission into Orugan Province on/about February 26. Defence Minister Nelson briefed Secretary Gates on the GOA plan recently.

OPPOSITION PARTY SUPPORT

5. (S/NF) Opposition Australian Labor Party leader Kevin Rudd called the Ambassador on February 21 to inquire about the GOA action and whether it would be a point of discussion during Rudd's scheduled meeting with Vice President Cheney on February 23. He complained that the Howard government was not observing the usual practice of informing the opposition party in advance of its plans, and thus he was concerned that he might be caught off guard by the press and unable to respond as effectively as he would like in campaign mode. He

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continued to express Labor's continued support in general for military involvement by Australia in Afghanistan, in stark contrast to Labor's position on Iraq.

MCCALLUM